



MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

THE OUTSIDE IS IN US ALL.

Meeting Date: October 17, 2019

Agenda Item: Thompson Chain of Lakes Emergency Fishing Regulation (R1)

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 10 Minutes

Background: Two mature female walleye were captured in Upper Thompson Lake during kokanee sampling on October 9. This is the first documented occurrence of walleye in Lincoln County. Both fish were killed and samples collected to conduct age and microchemistry analysis to determine if they were recently illegally introduced or if they were born in the lake. Additional monitoring will occur in Upper, Middle, and Lower Thompson Lakes in the coming weeks to determine if this is an isolated capture or if walleye are present throughout the lake system. To collect additional information about this discovery, the department is proposing an emergency kill, report, and turn in regulation for all walleye caught in Upper, Middle, and Lower Thompson Lakes. Similar regulations have recently been adopted for unauthorized introductions of northern pike in Lake Mary Ronan, brown trout in the Kootenai River, and walleye in Swan Lake. Rules associated with unauthorized placement of fish provides guidance on FWP response to discovery of illegal introductions and instituting mandatory catch and kill is one of the identified management actions (ARM 12.7.1503).

Public Involvement Process & Results: This proposal is the result of the discovery of walleye in Upper Thompson Lake on October 9. No public process has occurred prior to the commission meeting.

Alternatives and Analysis: The proposed regulation allows data collection from all walleye captured by anglers. Mandatory kill may also prevent additional expansion if a viable population is in the early stages of development. The commission could modify the department proposal and only include Upper Thompson Lake, which is the only water where walleye have been sampled to date. The commission could also defer this proposal until additional monitoring and analysis is completed.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale: The department recommends adopting this proposal to ensure collection of all walleye caught by anglers during the remaining open water angling season. Adopting now also ensures this regulation will appear in the 2020 Fishing Regulations booklet. The department also recommends adopting for Lower, Middle, and Upper Thompson Lake because they are all connected.

Proposed Motion: I move the commission approve a mandatory kill, report, and turn-in fishing regulation for all walleye caught in Lower Thompson Lake, Middle Thompson Lake, and Upper Thompson Lake.